

CLUB DRUGS

MDMA (Ecstasy), GHB, Rohypnol, ketamine, methamphetamine, and LSD are all extremely dangerous drugs. Over the last few years these drugs have become increasingly popular among young adults and have been classified as *Club Drugs*. **These are known as club drugs because they are often ingested at all-night dance parties known as raves.**

Raves are usually private non-licensed dance parties that are held on private sites, usually without a permit and promoted underground through bright, colorful and artistic invitations or flyers.

MDMA Ecstasy is 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine. It combines the chemical properties of methamphetamine (speed) with the hallucinogenic properties of mescaline. MDMA has become so popular at raves because it fabricates a feeling of utopia for the user without the fear of side effects.

GHB used to be available in health food stores as a healthy natural food supplement in the United States and can be found throughout Europe as a general anesthetic. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) declared GHB unsafe for over the counter sale and was placed within the Controlled Substance Act as a central nervous system depressant. When GHB is taken in the proper dosage it can have an intoxicating effect. The user will most likely feel an increase in energy, a feeling of affection, muscle relaxation and it enhances one's sexuality.

GHB is often compared to Rohypnol and associated with date rape and sexual and can be associated with hundreds of sexual assault cases.

While there are no true known long-term effects of GHB, it is still an extremely dangerous drug. GHB is particularly easy to overdose on if not careful. When too much GHB is taken the user will become tired and will soon be unconscious and begin to vomit. When mixed with other drugs GHB can be fatal. Today it can be found in almost every metropolitan area and ***is known as Georgia Home Boy, goop, Liquid Ecstasy, Gamma 10 and Gross Bodily Harm***. When in an unfamiliar place one should not accept drinks from strangers and if a drink is salty and/or flat one should be careful, as these are signs of GHB.

ROHYPNOL or ruffies, has come to be known as the 'date rape' drug. Rohypnol is produced and marketed by Roche Pharmaceuticals Inc. all over the world. It is marketed as a sleeping pill. The drug belongs to the benzodiazepine family with Valium, Librium and Xanax.

Although the drug is considered a depressant, it has been known to cause extremely aggressive behavior in those who abuse the drug. The effects usually peak after two hours but the effects have been documented to last up to twenty-four hours. Because the drug belongs to the benzodiazepine family, it is not likely to be lethal when ingested by itself; however, when the drug is mixed with other substances, it can be deadly. Within the United States Rohypnol is most commonly abused by high school and college students while drinking, and by cocaine and heroin addicts to help with the come down period. Currently Rohypnol is illegal in the United States and possession of the drug is as punishable as possession of cocaine.

KETAMINE HYDROCHLORIDE or *special k*, is a general anesthetic used on animals and small children and is known as a dissociative anesthetic. This is a dissociative anesthetic is a drug that separates perception from sensation; other drugs in this family include PCP and nitrous oxide. When one takes Ketamine in small doses it provides the user with a somewhat dreamy or cloudy sensation, much like the effects that nitrous oxide has on the body. When the drug is taken in larger doses the user experiences severe hallucinations; some describe them as out of body experiences or *K-Holes*. While experiencing a K-Hole the user will find it extremely difficult to think, speak, or even move.

Although Ketamine is sold and abused it is intended for medical use there are still side effects and the danger of overdose and/or death. There are several different ways to ingest Ketamine, the most common being snorting it and it has been smoked on top of marijuana.

Ketamine is illegal to possess without a prescription.

METHAMPHETAMINE Crystal Methamphetamine, also known as ice or crank, is a drug that was discovered and designed after amphetamine in the early parts of the 20th century. Methamphetamine impersonates the sensations that adrenaline and dopamine provide the body naturally and is a central nervous system stimulant. The addiction rate of methamphetamine is worse than that of heroin or cocaine.

Methamphetamine is one of the most dangerous drugs available in this country. Besides being extremely addictive, the side effects are hazardous to the user and the people around them. Methamphetamine abusers almost always experience memory loss, aggression, violence, chronic depression, psychotic behavior and sometimes experience seizures, and serious cardiac and/or neurological damage. In addition, a long-term user of methamphetamine suffers permanent damage to their dopamine transporters.

The majority of methamphetamine manufactured in this country is made in clandestine laboratories. These laboratories are far from hygienic and the majority of the chemicals used to make methamphetamine are simple over-the-counter drugs and household chemicals. Most of these laboratories are located in what has become known as the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). This includes Iowa, **Kansas**, Missouri, Nebraska and South Dakota because of the huge amount of laboratories located in these areas.

LSD Lysergic Acid Diethylamide or acid, is the strongest hallucinogen known to man. Dr. Albert Hoffman created the drug in the 1940s and after discovering its hallucinogenic properties, used it to study mental illness. While on LSD the user will experience dilated pupils, lowered body temperature, extreme perspiration, rapid heart rate, impaired depth and time perceptions, visual changes, and extreme changes in mood.

These extreme changes in mood are what are believed to cause what is called a *Bad Trip*. Bad trips occur when the user experiences severe, terrifying thoughts and feelings, fear of insanity and/or death, or just despair. The majority of injury and LSD fatalities are believed to be caused by these bad trips. When dealing with someone who is experiencing a bad trip, one should try to talk the person down. When doing this one should avoid quick movements, always talk in a calm and soft voice, and let the person move around freely. Another side effect of LSD is what has come to be known as flashbacks. A flashback is a recurrence of the effects of LSD, days, months, or even years after the last dose was taken. Some theories state that flashbacks are caused by moments of extreme anxiety or depression.

USERS OF CLUB DRUGS are usually between the ages of 16-25. They generally will experience severe mood swings, including anxiety and depression. They also will more often than not have unusual sleeping patterns, as many club drugs are extreme in one direction or the other. Many of the drugs cause the user to sleep for hours and sometimes days at a time while others cause the user to stay awake for long periods of time. The eating habits of the club drug user will also change dramatically. This is because all of the club drugs have been known to cause severe nausea and loss of appetite. If you believe that someone you know is abusing a club drug, seek professional medical help, as these drugs are all extremely dangerous and can prove to be life threatening.

**Hey! Maybe the X in Generation X stands for something, after all.
Same for the Y in Generation Y.**

In fact, maybe the X stands for X-treme chemical curiosity, and the Y for "Why not?" This is one conclusion you could draw if you felt the spray off the latest wave of psychoactive chemicals -- including ecstasy, ketamine, GHB, 2C-B, and others that crest every night at 11:30 or so in clubs and raves from coast to coast.

Effects of the drugs span the gamut -- ecstasy can inspire speedy feelings of empathy, ketamine out-of-body (and out-of-mind) experiences, GHB a booze-like buzz of bliss and puking, 2C-B giddiness and hallucinations -- and they appeal to way different crowds, too. All-night ravers lean towards ecstasy and, increasingly, the old stimulant standby crystal methamphetamine-which has even lost a few pounds and powdered over some wrinkles for the occasion. New York club goers like ketamine, dance-club denizens on the West Coast and elsewhere dig GHB and 2C-B, or "Nexus."

And while users claim all sorts of expanded self-awareness from the drugs, others aren't so sure that satori can be bought, sold, or borrowed for 20-30 bucks a pop in a nightclub john or a corner of an abandoned warehouse, whether there happens to be a thousand sweaty bodies trance-dancing and pseudo-humping to the thump of 120-beat-a-minute techno music next to you or not.

Club Drugs Confidential

A lot of strange stuff has been bubbling up lately in the old club-drugs chemical cauldron. In fact, there are so many new chemicals turning up (and so many pricey, act-alike herbal products masquerading as real drugs) that it's tough telling all the players without a program. Luckily, you've got a program in your hands, right now.

In it, we will be discussing some of the new (and newly-recycled) drugs that are popping up on the dance-club and rave scene. What we won't be doing is advocating drug use in general or any chemical in particular. We've seen too many lives torn apart in too many ways to endorse the kind of reckless seat-of-the-pants chemistry experiments that people run on themselves.

On the other hand, we know that people will smoke, snort, and swallow just about everything under the sun and moon in pursuing instant enlightenment and nocturnal nirvana, no matter what we say. And we've seen lots of lives wrecked from sheer ignorance, too. The risk means you need to know as much about that as you can to avoid as much of it as possible.

MDMA/Ecstasy: The drug that did more than any other to kick off the club-drugs phenomenon is "ecstasy," or MDMA.

Chemically related to both methamphetamine and mescaline, it combines properties of both without the excesses of either, according to users. That made it an ideal party drug for lots of people, and it quickly became a staple at "raves," the all-night tribal trancedances that combine high-energy techno music and the peace-and-love ethic of the new alternative culture.

Users claim that ecstasy (or "E," as it's often called) enhances empathy and catalyzes the rapturous group consciousness that raves are meant to embody, without the perceptual and mental distortions common to such psychedelics as LSD. On the downside, "E" has been linked to several deaths in the United States and Britain, usually brought on by hyperthermia (high body temperature) and dehydration. Proponents claim that risks can be minimized by drinking lots of water (or other nonalcoholic liquids) and by taking frequent breaks to avoid overheating during marathon dance sessions.

Chemical name N methyl-3,4-methylenedioxyamphetamine

Drug type Hallucinogenic amphetamine

Street name(s) E, X, XTC, Ecstasy

Duration Effects usually last 4-6 hours, depending on dosage.

Special Considerations Ecstasy rarely causes panic reactions, but it can cause users to "over-amp" in various ways, particularly if used during periods of intense physical exertion, like dancing. Users can guard against dehydration and hyperthermia (high body temperature) by taking frequent breaks and drinking plenty of water.

Ketamine lingered on the fringes of the drug culture for decades, until it was dusted off in the early '90s by Generation X-pplorers, impressed by the sheer freakiness of its effects, who turned it into a psychedelic standby in raves and dance clubs.

Used medically as an anesthetic, ketamine differs from other such drugs by stimulating breathing and heart beat, rather than slowing them down. It's also different from other anesthetics (except its chemical cousin, PCP), in its ability to trigger psychological dissociation, hallucinations, even out-of-body experiences and near-death-like states.

Still, one person's veggie burger is another person's poison: K's drawbacks as a medical drug serve as its drawing cards as a party drug.

At "subanesthetic" doses (about a tenth of a surgical dose), ketamine triggers major changes in thought and perception, ranging from closed-eye visual hallucinations to "profound transpersonal states," in the words of one researcher. Users undergo a dissolving of normal ego states early in a ketamine experience, accompanied by a sensation of floating or disconnection from the body. Also common are feelings of connection with alternate worlds or parallel dimensions that can seem as real as our own. The drug can also cause numbness and incoordination, even a state of "virtual helplessness" according to a report in the British Medical Journal. And while that may not be a problem if you're home in bed, it can be something else altogether at a rave or dance club.

Finally, using K with alcohol causes vomiting, according to users who presumably learned the usual way.

Chemical name 2-(o-chlorophenyl)-2-(methyl-amino)cyclohexanone HCL

Drug type Dissociative anesthetic

Street name(s) K, Special K, Vitamin K

Duration Effects usually last about an hour, depending on dosage. Recovery period lasts 90-120 minutes.

Special Considerations Ketamine is extremely unpredictable, and users can hurt themselves through falls or other accidents. In the event of panic, reduce stimuli in a quiet, darkened room.

2C-B A relative newcomer on the dance-drug scene, 2 C-B produces a variety of effects similar to MDMA.

Effects typically start with an "energy tremor," or surge, that occurs during the first 20-30 minutes. Visual distortions and hallucinations are common during the plateau phase of the experience (1-2 hours after ingestion), often accompanied by feelings of insight and heightened emotional awareness and sensitivity. Visual effects associated with 2 C-B include intensification of color and transformation of everyday objects or scenes into unusual forms. Other sensory effects include a heightening of smell, touch, and taste, in addition to increased response to color and sound.

Although it has no formally-recognized medical uses, 2C-B has been used by a number of therapists, often in conjunction with MDMA. It's also used at raves and in dance clubs, like ecstasy. And just as with ecstasy, liquids should be available during use to reduce the risk of dehydration.

Chemical name 4-Bromo-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine

Drug type Phenethylamine

Street name(s) Nexus, Utopia, Venus

Duration Varies with dose, but 5-6 hours is common.

Special Considerations Due to its similarity to MDMA, users should drink plenty of water to reduce risk of dehydration.

GHB If you think ordinary drugs are complex, consider GHB. It's even got two names, GHB (its real name) and GBH -- a misabbreviation of an early street name, "Grievous Bodily Harm." Still, all the names and letters refer to the same thing: gamma hydroxybutyrate.

A natural component of normal brain chemistry, GHB was legally available in health stores for years until the U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned its sale in 1990, due to adverse reactions linked to its unrestricted use. Early problems were mostly minor, but the FDA launched an investigation that eventually turned up various forms of GHB toxicity. Symptoms included dizziness, slowed breathing and heart rate, and a "non-rousable" sleep that's sometimes mistaken for coma.

As production sloshed onto the black market (via do-it-yourself "chemical kits" sold over the internet), both GHB and a legal chemical precursor, GBL ("Blue Nitro," "Renewtrient"), began to be linked to more problems. The most serious was a potentially life-threatening overdose syndrome, especially when either is used with alcohol. Both were also tied to incidents of drink spiking and date rape--some ending in death--which fueled passage of a nationwide ban in February, 2000.

Still, GHB may be as noteworthy for what it symbolizes as for what it is. Because it (and chemicals like it) are bubbling away, even as we speak, in the beakers and brains of Gen-X/Y drug chemists, anxious to put their mark on the hearts and minds of a generation. And the only way we find out whether they succeed or fail is the old-fashioned way: through trial and error, one side effect -- or overdose -- at a time.

Chemical name Gamma hydroxybutyrate

Drug type Euphoriant-depressant

Street name(s) Liquid E, Liquid X, "GBH," "Grievous Bodily Harm"

Duration Depends on dose, but effects start in 15-30 minutes and can last 2-4 hours.

Special Considerations Because it produces CNS depression, GHB should not be used with other depressant drugs or alcohol--a main factor in many adverse reactions. Since liquid GHB is often sold pre-mixed with juices, dosage can be difficult to gauge.

E-ternal truths To some people, drugs and sex and rock-n-roll go together like, well, like drugs and sex and rock-n-roll. That's been true for a long time. It's no surprise that things aren't different today. Still, drugs today are different, and they're likely to get even more different in the future. And in spite of any hype you've heard (or may hear) to the contrary, one simple fact about drugs has always been true -- and probably always will be.

Here it is:

[Insert drug name here] is a powerful chemical that can cause serious problems if misused or used under the wrong circumstances. And they can all be misused or used under the wrong circumstances. It's been true a lot longer than sex and drugs and tribal/trance/techno/hip-hop/trip-hop have gone together: What goes up must come down.

And if you want to make sure that the law of cosmic-consciousness cause and effect doesn't come crashing down on you when you least expect it -- or are least prepared to deal with it -- you'd better remember it.

Thirst-Technotrip Tips

Given all the hype that raves and Generation-X/Y drug habits have garnered, it's almost surprising that so few serious health problems have turned up or have been linked to the drugs.

One reason is dosage. Club drugs tend to be safer than the rock-n-roll drugs of a generation ago because they're typically sold at lower dosage levels and are thus more easily managed. (Example: LSD-If it were a beer, they might call it "Acid Lite.") Doses today average 30-50 micrograms-down considerably from the 200 mcg-plus trips of a generation ago. The result? A much less intense, panic-driven experience, and fewer freakouts.

Still, there are problems in Raver City: Hyperthermia (dangerously high body temperature) for one. Deaths have been reported at raves in England and the United States, linked to the combined effects of high body temperature and dehydration with hours of E-inspired dancing in often-overheated rooms.

Those who promote these raves provide Destination X-ers to drink lots of water-it helps both to replenish fluids and provides an occasional break from the nonstop exertion of dancing. Yet drinking too much water can cause serious physical problems, too. Rave promoters provide "chill out" rooms, smart-drug and juice bars, or plenty of plain old H2O for those attending.

Best solution – Don't due drugs!